

MEETING SUMMARY

State of the Flats

The third annual "State of the Flats" meeting, held January 26, 2000, at the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities attracted close to 50 community members, who braved the snowy weather to come listen to Department of Energy and Kaiser-Hill senior management report to the public the accomplishments and disappointments of the past year and the anticipated schedule for the next year and beyond. Reports were given by Paul Golan, the DOE Acting Manager at Rocky Flats; Bob Card, the President and CEO of Kaiser-Hill; and Patty Bubar, the Rocky Flats Program Office Director at DOE Headquarters.

Mr. Golan began the evening by stressing DOE's values for Rocky Flats cleanup: namely that it be done safely, efficiently, thoroughly and in a timely manner; that it be based on the future use preferences of the community; that it maintain stewardship responsibilities following cleanup; and that it be done with open public information and involvement. Mr. Golan reported that Kaiser-Hill earned \$11.9 million out of a possible \$14.5 million for meeting its "regular" performance measures in 1999. In addition, Kaiser-Hill received \$3.8 million out of a possible \$58 million for "super-stretch" performance measures. He pointed out that stretch measures are designed to accelerate the work to meet the 2006 closure deadline, and that part of the \$58 million that was available included multi-year milestones set for completion in fiscal year 2000. His bottom line message is that right now, Kaiser-Hill has accelerated its work performance to a 2008 completion schedule, and still needs to improve its performance to achieve a 2006 closure.

One of the major themes in his remarks was the Site safety record. This past year, DOE began tracking leading indicators such as violations of the authorization basis (basically the standards and measures required in operating procedures). Typically, the site would track lagging indicators such as lost workdays. Lagging indicators are after the fact, that is, someone has already gotten hurt. Leading indicators, on the other hand, demonstrate trends in performance for which attention can be brought to bear before an incident involving injury occurs. This past year, DOE noticed an upward trend in the number of authorization basis violations. As a result, work stoppages were ordered, and Kaiser-Hill had to take time to increase workforce emphasis on safety matters.

In addressing the future, Mr. Golan focused on the new contract, signed January 24, 2000, with Kaiser-Hill. He stressed that safety is a crucial component of the contract, along with accelerating the work and reducing

costs. He noted that if work is not done safely work will not be done. If work is not done, the contractor receives no fee. This presents a major incentive to weave safety into the very fabric of operations at Rocky Flats. One of his primary concerns for future safety is that as the work becomes repetitive, complacency might become a negative factor in safety performance. DOE and Kaiser Hill must work to guard against such complacency.

The next speaker was Patty Bubar the point person for Rocky Flats, in the Rocky Flats Program Office at DOE Headquarters. She came to the meeting with greetings and a message from Carolyn Huntoon, the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. Ms. Huntoon's message emphasized that DOE Headquarters is committed to resolving issues, expediting decisions, and breaking down barriers to secure a safe 2006 closure for Rocky Flats.

Ms. Bubar described the job she does and advised the community that she is the person through whom most communication concerning Rocky Flats and the community is directed. She also is responsible for making sure that other DOE programs are aligned to support Rocky Flats closure. As such, she must track issues such as WIPP availability, the development and certification of waste and special nuclear materials transport containers, and the progress needed to ship plutonium to Savannah River.

Bob Card, President and CEO of Kaiser-Hill, was the next speaker. He reported on his company's progress toward Site closure and stated he feels that they will be able to achieve a schedule that puts them on the 2006 closure path by sometime in fiscal year 2001. He reported that Kaiser-Hill's tracking of safety indicators shows that they are meeting industry standards, but still need to improve performance to meet internal goals. His objective is that the site will achieve best-in-industry performance and become the role model for other industrial facilities. Mr. Card also spoke about leading and lagging indicators and assured the audience that safety leads productivity as a driving force at the site.

Following Mr. Card's presentation, Max Dodson, the Assistant Regional Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Steve Gunderson, the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement Project Coordinator for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE); and Joe Legare, the DOE-Rocky Flats Assistant Manager for Environment and Infrastructure, gave short synopses, from a regulatory oversight perspective, of performance over the past year. Max Dodson with EPA stated that he is pleased with the overall progress being made at the Site, especially the opening of WIPP. He also pointed to the demolition of Building 779, and the signing of the Record of Decision for moving plutonium to Savannah River as accomplishments. He did, however, note concern with delays in getting the plutonium packaging line up and running. Mr. Dodson also pointed out that EPA has yet to approve use of closure caps at the Site, and that contrary to

what is found in the new contract between DOE and Kaiser-Hill, EPA still believes that the Site must meet state water quality standards on-site following closure.

Steve Gunderson, CDPHE, also pointed to similar accomplishments including the Building 779 demolition. The State shares EPA's concerns with the water quality standards and the plutonium packaging line. Mr. Gunderson stated another concern about the need to develop contingency waste storage should any further delays occur in the reopening of WIPP.

Joe Legare with DOE stated that he believes the site has now fully integrated environmental compliance into its mission. In the past, compliance was only secondary to missions such as weapons component production or restart of facilities. His example of a notable achievement over the past year was the removal of all the pondcrete and saltcrete, the largest percentage of low-level-mixed waste, from the site. Joe commented that, overall, DOE was pleased with the recent assessment by the state of New Mexico concerning the Site's readiness to restart shipments to WIPP. The paperwork will be submitted the end of this month, and if all goes well, the Site could resume WIPP shipments beginning in March, and will be the first DOE site to ship transuranic mixed waste to WIPP under the new RCRA permit.

An open question and answer session followed. DOE and Kaiser-Hill are working to investigate issues and develop responses all of the questions and concerns raised at the meeting. The comment response document will be posted on the website once it is complete.